

EVICTED AT DUNSHAUGHLIN BOG

BY M. G. SAMPSON.

All the world knows Dunshaughlin Bog, near the River Finn. Keep road-way till you come to the Ballinasloe lodge of Ballina castle, then strike up into a bridge path to the left to Raphoe mountain. From this Ballina castle can be seen one of the most perfect castles in Donegal. The late Lord Ballina had passed here a life of festivity, but the present poor had left Ireland and established himself in India, and the domain was Dunmoyle's on a lease, the tenants paying Dunmoyle double what their fathers had paid Lord Ballina, and being consequently often in arrears.

Shannon and his wife had been all the way to Castlerough, a good ten miles. Peggie had taken off her shoes, her temper proof against the wagon and was trying to pacify Shannon, a strong, off-hand looking young Irishman, not having had a sixpence in his pocket to buy a half pound of tobacco.

"Lord bless me, Michael," Peggie said, stepping up close beside him, "isn't this for all the world like the evening the hailstorm came on and the car ran away with my father, and he came home from McCoy's wedding, and a crowd of people in the road from Raphoe fair, and it all broke up with the stones going to be pounded, and the red shawl he had bought my number in the gripe of the ditch, and she screaming, and the two wheels off and tattered, and a power of boys in the cabin drinking to Lord Ballina for let-

Peggie, who was hospitable in her own way, bestirred herself about the potatoes. Rathdonnel took them from her hand, and peeled off the skins with his fingers.

"God bless you both," she said, "don't be thinking of Dunmoyle now. Time enough and we put to our shifts with the agent in the cabin. I wish to the Lord I could drag Lord Ballina out of his grave, he'd rid you of summons. But if I live till Monday, Michael, I go down to Raphoe and get the plat and bring it home and sew it into bonnets and hats. That will pay for the meal, and with the blessing of God, this weather will soon fill out the potatoes."

"Och, Peggie, they won't buy hats of you in Raphoe," said Rathdonnel, in a tone of annoyance "for those cursed sewing machines of Dunmoyle leave no work. He's never easy unless turning two guineas into three."

"If it wasn't Peggie would cry fit for ten burials, I'd be along with Rooney to America," said Shannon.

"I would drop dead myself," said Peggie, wiping her blue eyes, first with one corner of her apron, then with another; "but they wouldn't let you land, Michael, and you not a penny in your pocket. Sure you'd be sent back without even a blessing."

"Michael," said Rathdonnel, "did Rooney give you a hint so you see the ricks burning last night? It was a fine sight, the whole face of the earth

without the risk of a fall. It would be cheaper for me to kill a cow than a woodcock; but I'll fly a salmon whenever I get a spot that nobody sees me, and draw the river, too, with a line at night. Dunmoyle may call it poaching if he likes, but the Lord put the salmon in the Finn, and I see nothing amiss in me filling my basket; call it poaching if he likes. What would Dunmoyle care if I never snapped a cap or threw a line?"

Something seemed to break loose in Rathdonnel's brain. He raised his hand and thrust at Dunmoyle, and springing forward got the whip from his hand, and with a gesture of his arm sent him headlong down the steep descent. Then, pushing his way back through the stubble where the mare stood restless, the rims of his nostrils expanded, he took hold of the bridle that hung down, and switching her on the belly, watched her scramble down the mountain. He was so busy that he did not see the token of a fatal fall from the saddle without a trace of foul play.

Early next morning he came under Shannon's window. In a corner of the cabin Peggie and Shannon lay sleeping the baby between them. Leaning through the broken pane, radiating an aroma of tobacco, he said: "Michael, I've had the word they're making about Dunmoyle. No one only a day they haven't a trace of him only that he went the road over Raphoe mountain; but the mare's come back to the stable and they're going to search the gulch. No one only a day could reach it. McCrum says he'll let himself down with a rope, but if it's there Dunmoyle is, we'll leave him till he's rot. He'll never be in Raphoe again, for he's the nearest place to hell in Ireland."

"How did he get there?" said Shannon, embracing Peggie with one arm. "No one only God can tell that," said Rathdonnel; "but he was strange to the mountain, and if he has tried his luck at a tumble, maybe he got a lodging he didn't dream of."

"Och, Rathdonnel, but you take the sight out of my eyes," said Shannon, turning away her face and holding fast the baby. "Give me the cloak, Michael, behind you, quick, and let me out of the cabin; I'm smothering."

Wrapped up in Michael's cloak, Peggie stepped over the threshold and sat down in one corner of the garden, and began braiding her long, thick black hair. Please God, nothing has happened to Dunmoyle, she said, slowly turning her blue shaded eyes on Rathdonnel, who had followed. "It would be a bad thing to see a man go before the Lord and no soul in him."

"Where were you, Michael, at the heel of the evening?"

"Where was I?" said Shannon. "Sure, it was last night, and the shindy was at Mullin's to finish Shiel's wake. We had the pipes and tobacco, and Mullin let me have the whiskey on credit, so I was sittin' down in Dunshaughlin Bog, singing to myself, when I come home to keep myself from sleeping."

"The boy, his sleeves rolled up, was crowding himself behind Peggie to have a spree over some curdled milk. "For heaven's sake, Michael, what's the matter?" she said, pointing toward the bog, where a sergeant of police and soldiers in red coats were hurrying toward the cabin. "What brings them here?"

"They're everywhere, and will be till they nab some one," said Rathdonnel. "I have a warrant here," said the sergeant as though addressing them all; and then turning to Shannon, "Mullin's whiskey made you talk last night," he said. "You swore to destroy all belonging to Dunmoyle. No one can find him. The town is fuller than it can hold, and they say you must be put before the justice."

Peggie, without knowing what she was doing, had left the corner and was in the doorway, listening to the conversation, looking at Shannon and at her, as they went from one word to another. As the sergeant watched her, the baby with its fat little hands seized hold of the warrant. "God be with you, Michael, do you know anything about Dunmoyle?" she asked, unlocking the blue cloak and pulling it down below her shoulders as though to breathe the better.

"Shannon saw Dunmoyle go off on the mare," said the sergeant; "I know that for sure."

"Dunmoyle went by the public, and the whole of Shiel's funeral watching him," said Shannon.

"Well, we can't find him," said the sergeant, drawing tighter the strap of his belt, "and I must take you."

Peggie turned pale as Shannon gave a bound to his feet to say good-bye, but on the edge of the bog he heard a cry, and after going a few steps more saw Peggie in the arms of Rathdonnel, and tearing himself away from the soldiers and swinging an Irish oath, he went back to her.

"It's a pity of her," said the sergeant; "she's near dead with fright, and small blame to her. She came of honest decent, God-fearing people. Bad case to you, Shannon; this is your cursed work. Feel of her heart. Sure, it's moving every way."

Shannon dropped on his knee by Peggie's side and threw the long blue cloak on the turf. "Peggie," he whispered, "I am holding you in my arms. Don't you feel me? Lord have mercy on us, Peggie, I'm telling you the truth. I never raised a finger to hurt Dunmoyle."

"Don't let her die without the priest who christened her," said the sergeant; "I'll go every inch of the way, have him myself."

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"Of course you do, Shannon," said the sergeant, "but I'm a bit of a doctor, and I tell you she has panted the breath of her body out. Her heart hasn't beat for fifty seconds. The blood in her veins is still."

The soldiers stood about in a variety of positions, the baby among them. Suddenly Shannon felt Peggie's heart beating against his arm. He gave a rather contemptuous glance at the sergeant.

"Rathdonnel," he said, "come you here and look at her. See, Peggie, darling, there's the bed in the corner for you."

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